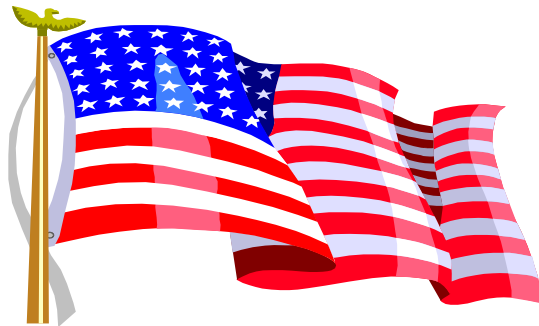




Victim Advocate Self Care



What Impacts Us Most: Understanding Helps Us Cope

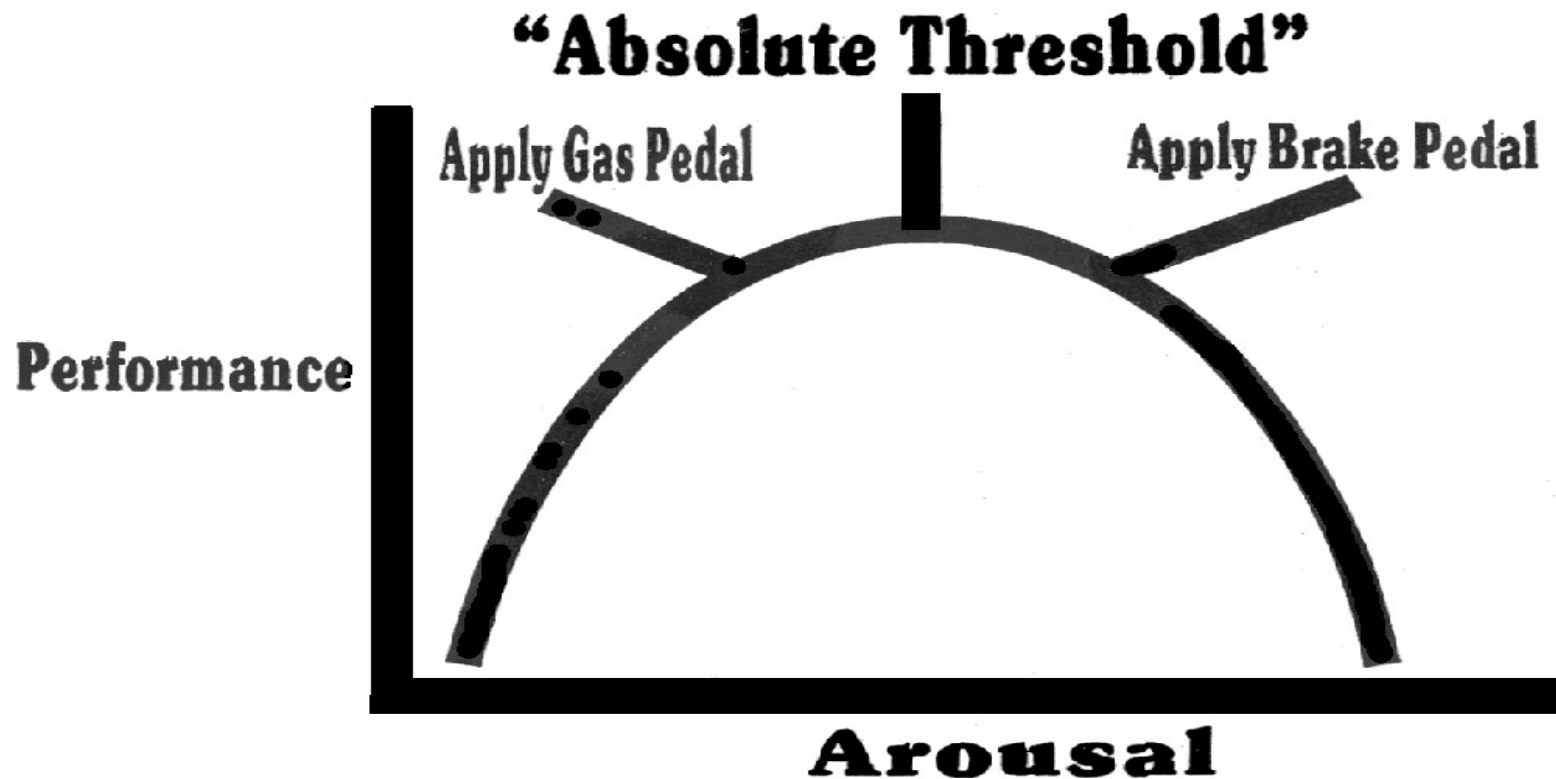
Think of a case or an incident that has bothered you or stayed with you in some way. If you are new, think of a type of case that scares you or that you worry about responding to in the future. Include the following in your description:

- Describe the case and the outcome.
- How did you know you were distressed?
- What did you do or are you doing to cope?





Stress Curve



Peak Performance Curve



Categories of Stress

- General or Normal Stress
- Situational Stress
- Traumatic Stress



Categories of Trauma

- Type I: Short term, single event
- Type II: Prolonged or repeated
- Type III: Vicarious exposure

**When you do this work -
you will be exposed;
When you are exposed -
you will be impacted.**



Normal Symptomatic Responses During Trauma

- Dissociation
- Anxiety
- Affective Responses



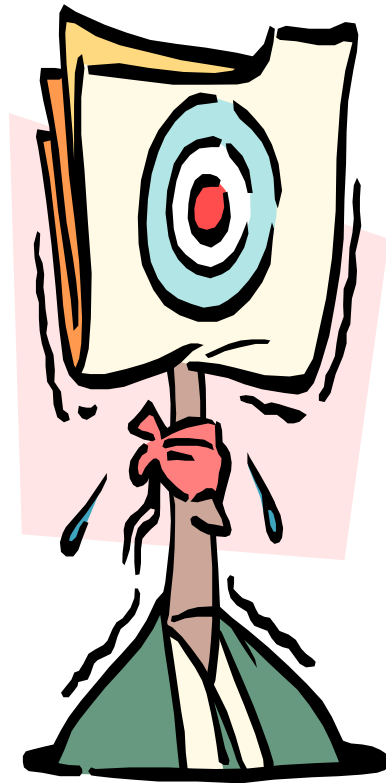
What do you see?





Why the Work Impacts Us

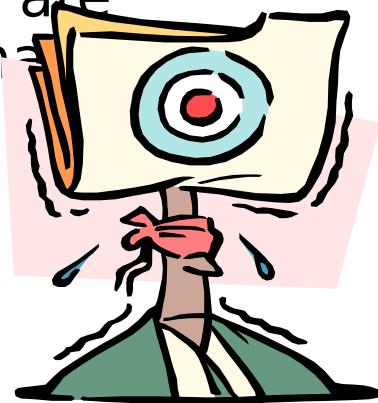
- We function outside the range of “normal” in our work
- Exposure to the reality of personal cruelty and graphic material
- Constant awareness of the sometimes horrific impact of violent crime on victims and families
- Ongoing awareness of the possibility of victimization, for ourselves and those we love
- We are the direct targets of manipulation, abuse, and threats
- Isolation due to our work and what we know





Why the Work Impacts Us

- We are exposed to constant struggles with power and abuse
- Feelings of responsibility for victim and community safety
- Success is often not dependent on the merits of our work
- Exposure to the anger and distrust of others who are either reacting to their anger with us, being too harsh on victims, or with the system because offenders are not held accountable
- Exposure to failures in the justice system





What Makes Us Susceptible?

- Too much exposure to traumatic material over too long a time
- Something outside of your normal
- Something that feels too close to home for you or those you love
- Something that upsets your existing belief systems
- And remember...positive outcomes don't always mean no trauma



Impact on the Individual

- Changes in beliefs about self, others, safety, and meaning
- Inability to feel safe and secure for self or others
- “Extreme” interpretations of victim or offender behavior (too positive or too negative)
- Changes in perception of personal power, capacity, or agency
- Changes in usual coping style
- Misuse or overuse of potentially negative coping skills



Impact on the Individual

- Labeling normal conflict as abusive
- Disruptions in relatedness to others
- Sensory system symptoms: images, sensations, feelings, or behaviors
- Trauma symptoms: intrusion, avoidance, or hyperarousal
- Depression, anxiety, or sleep disturbance
- Disruption or intrusion in usual sexual or intimate behavior
- Extreme burnout, withdrawal, or cynicism



Influencing Factors: Personal Considerations

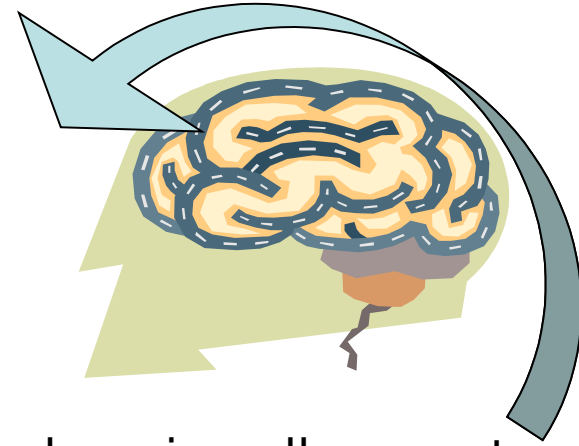
- Presence of a clear life philosophy
- Level of commitment to the work and involved issues
- Level of self awareness
- Level of affect tolerance
- Personal history
- Current circumstances
- Professional identity
- Openness to training and supervision





What Happens in Our Heads?

Integrated Trauma:

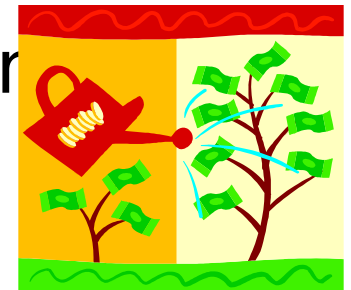


- Some changes are permanent; however, learning allows us to mitigate our reactions to them
- Material moves from the primitive and reactive part of the brain into the cognitive part of the brain
- Changes from primarily experiential and sensory memory that feels current and overwhelming, to cognitive memory attached to language with which we can effectively cope and which is experienced as past



Vicarious Trauma Recovery

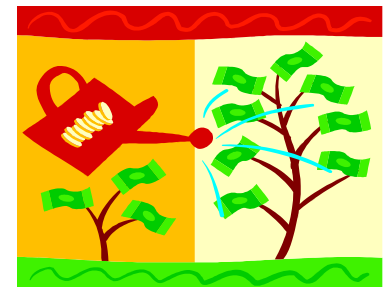
- What we expect will help to determine our experience of recovery
- Expect to be changed by the work:
When you walk into hell, you are never the same
- If you stay in the work, addressing secondary trauma will be an ongoing responsibility





Vicarious Trauma Recovery

- Cognitive interventions mitigate and assist with our recovery from the sensory and emotional components of trauma
- The development of transformational meaning mitigates and assists with our recovery from the way trauma impacts our world view and interpersonal relationships

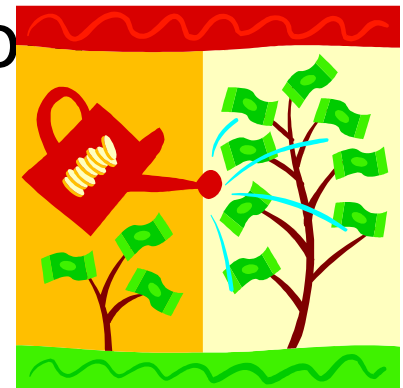




Vicarious Trauma Recovery

- As with primary victims of trauma, the ways we respond to these experiences can cause them to be destructive or transformational:

We can be irrevocably harmed or grow stronger and wiser as a result of our experiences





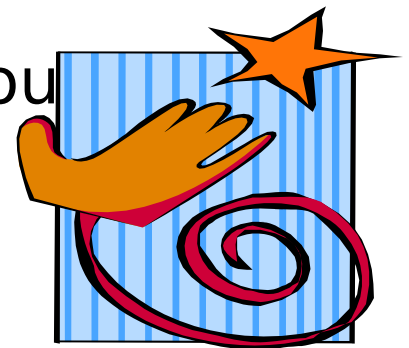
Identifying Positive Outcomes

- Think of a case that makes you feel good or proud about the work you do. Include the following in your description:
 - Describe the case and the outcome.
 - What is it that feels positive about the case or the outcome?
 - What do you do to remind yourself of this case and others like it on a regular basis?



Prevention and Intervention Strategies

- Accept that vicarious trauma, secondary trauma, and parallel process are normal reactions to extended exposure to the trauma of working with victims of sexual assault and domestic violence
- Recognize secondary trauma when it occurs, name it and either get or offer support and assistance
- Proactively plan for intervention, with you, your co-workers and your staff





Prevention and Intervention Strategies

- Set limits
- Remember the big picture
- Attend to empathy for self and others
- Maintain professional connections
- Limit exposure especially when contaminated





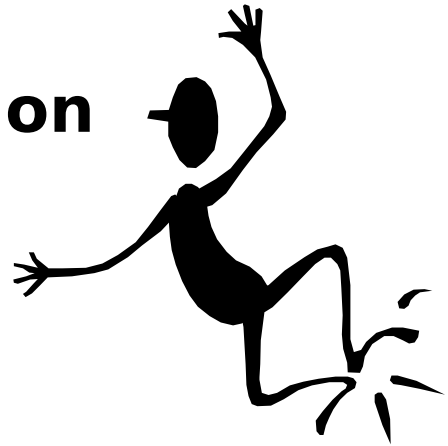
Prevention and Intervention Strategies

- Ongoing education and training
- Support: learn to accept it, get it, give it
- Give positive feedback to someone who needs it
- Learn and use self protection skills: internal, verbal, physical
- Keep positive reminders of the good in the world near you



Prevention and Intervention Strategies

- **Regular supervision and consultation**
- **Limit overtime**
- **Laugh**
- **Get a life - outside of work**
- **Move, stretch, breathe, exercise, get back in your body**
- **Connect with others who don't do this work**
- **Play regularly**





Prevention and Intervention Strategies

- Drink water
- Eat chocolate
- Surprise someone you work with or someone you love
- Treat yourself to a massage, a fishing trip, a gourmet dinner, a favorite book or a fun "B" movie
- Practice spiritual renewal
- Spend time with family, friends and children who aren't in trouble or being victimized
- Seek personal treatment if symptoms persist or if coping behaviors are dangerous





Trauma and Transformation

- Identify one new behavior or activity you will institute as a result of this discussion

and

- Identify a personal reminder of transcendence and decide how you will keep it close to you in your work





Trauma and Transformation

The world breaks everyone, and after,
some are strong at the broken
places.

~ Hemmingway ~